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**Clubs' environmentally responsible behavior:  
The perspectives of club managers in North America**

by

**Xingyi Zhang**

A thesis submitted to the graduate faculty  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
MASTER OF SCIENCE

Major: Hospitality Management

Program of Study Committee:  
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Ames, Iowa

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## **ABSTRACT**

The engagement of corporate environmental responsibility (CER) and the implementation of environmentally responsible behavior (ERB) are crucial for clubs to reduce negative effects on the environment and to build good relationships with stakeholders. However, little research has examined ERB implementation and barriers to ERB by clubs. This study surveyed 3,250 club managers in North America and measured the following three variables: perceived importance of CER by clubs, current ERB practices, and perceived barriers to ERB. Independent samples *t*-tests and chi-square tests were utilized to compare the differences on these three variables between clubs with sustainable practices (SUS clubs) and those clubs with no sustainable practices (non-SUS clubs). The results of this study showed that SUS clubs considered CER to be more important than non-SUS clubs did. Furthermore, SUS clubs engaged in a greater number of ERB practices and perceived fewer barriers to ERB implementation than non-SUS clubs did. The findings of this study could fill the literature gap that lacks research about perceptions of club managers on ERB of clubs. The findings of this study will also help club managers to improve environmental performance by implementing ERB and overcoming barriers to ERB.

## **CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION**

### **Background of the Study**

Clubs are places that provide dining, social, and lodging services to members who join for social and recreational purposes along with similar interests and backgrounds (Perdue, 1997). The types of clubs include country clubs, golf clubs, dining clubs, city clubs, yacht clubs, military clubs, university clubs, corporate clubs, and residential clubs (Perdue, 1997). Specifically, 78% of clubs were based on golf, such as country clubs (Club Manager Association of America [CMAA], 2014). A country club owns a clubhouse, a golf course, and other sports facilities, such as tennis courts and swimming pools.

The club industry in the United States contributes important economic impacts in terms of total income, expenses, and employees (CMAA, 2014). In 2013, the member clubs of CMAA provided 363,000 jobs, with a payroll of \$9.5 billion. In addition, clubs have also greatly contributed to the local environment. For example, the golf course of a club can play a role in protecting local biodiversity and natural resources and providing a good living environment to local residents (Hammond & Hudson, 2007; Tanner & Gange, 2005).

However, clubs' service activities, including sports and dining, could potentially lead to environmental problems, such as green-house-gas (GHG) emissions and wasting water, energy, and resources. For example, golf course irrigation, a main water use system, could lead to water waste if it was poorly designed and managed (Deya Tortella & Tirado, 2011; Gossling, 2015; Styles, Schoenberger, & Galvez-Martos, 2015). In addition, cooking high-order food (meat and seafood) can be one of the main causes for high GHG emission.

Corporate environmental responsibility (CER) has been introduced to solve corporate environmental issues. CER is the ecological version of corporate social responsibility (CSR),



which is the voluntary commitment of a firm to contribute to social and environmental goals (European Commission, 2002). Similarly, CER is the commitment of a firm to contribute to the environment (Jamison, Raynolds, Holroyd, Veldman, & Tremblett, 2005). It emphasizes that firms should seek profits while adhering to sustainable development principles of environmental protection (DesJardins, 1998). CER is fulfilled by implementing environmentally responsible behavior (ERB), which refers to the actions that an individual or an organization implement to reduce negative effects on the environment (Stern, 2000).

In the hospitality and tourism industry, many companies and organizations have engaged in CER and environmental practices to save waste and energy, and to improve their environmental performance while maximizing their profits (Alvarez Gil, Burgos Jimenez, & Cespedes Lorente, 2001; Grosbois, 2012; Mensah, 2006; Scanlon, 2007). For example, hotels use low-flow toilets and showerheads to save water; and restaurants compost food to reduce food wastes. In the club industry, implementing ERB helps clubs not only to reduce negative environmental effects but also to improve their business performance by reducing costs and to build a positive image to potential customers (Delma & Toffel, 2004; Heikkurinen, 2010).

Nevertheless, there are some obstacles that may prevent firms from implementing ERB (Hillary, 2004). These barriers can be categorized into internal and external barriers (Hillary, 2004; Murillo-Luna, Garcés-Ayerbe, & Rivera-Torres, 2011). Internal barriers are obstacles that arise within firms, preventing or impeding ERB implementation. An example is a lack of financial support or employees who specialize in ERB. Such internal barriers can be controlled by assigning necessary resources. In the hotel sector, internal barriers mainly include the perceived high cost of ERB, and a lack of knowledge and skills to solve environmental problems (Chan, 2011). Alternatively, external barriers refer to factors that

cannot be controlled by firms and hinder ERB implementation (Murillo-Luna, Garces-Ayerbe, & Rivera-Torres, 2011). For example, a lack of encouragement from national organizations is an external factor that has led firms to prioritize profits over environmental performance (Hillary, 2004).

### **Problem Statements**

Clubs represent an important sector in economic development and sustainable community management. However, club amenities and services, such as dining and golf, can cause environmental problems to the communities (Deya Tortella & Tirado, 2011; Gossling, 2015; Kasim, Gursay, Okumus, & Wong, 2014; Styles, Schoenberger, & Galvez-Martos, 2015; Wheeler & Nauright, 2006). Nevertheless, little research has examined the environmental issues in the club industry. Thus, there is a need to examine the current environmental issues and environmental management in the club industry.

It is essential to recognize the perceived importance of CER to a business in implementing ERB (Gonzalez-Benito & Gonzalez-Benito, 2006). In other words, the greater importance managers place on CER, the more likely they engage in ERB implementation (Gonzalez-Benito & Gonzalez-Benito, 2006). However, little research has investigated how clubs perceive CER in relation to the club business. Therefore, it is needed to examine the perceived importance of CER to the clubs.

As a response to CER, ERB is a reflection of clubs' environmental concerns and help clubs to improve their environmental performance (Dibrell, Craig, & Hansen, 2011; Stern, 2000). ERB practices are specific approaches that solve different environmental problems. In the hospitality industry, environmental problems and sustainable practices have been more widely investigated in hotels and restaurants (Alvarez Gil, Burgos Jimenez, & Cespedes

Lorente, 2001; Mensah, 2006; Scanlon, 2007). However, little research has been conducted to investigate the ERB practices in the club business. Hence, identifying the status of current ERB practices may help clubs to develop ERB practice strategies and improve environmental performance.

In addition, little research has been conducted to investigate the barriers to ERB implementation in a club context. As barriers present obstacles to clubs' ERB implementation, a study of barriers to ERB is necessary to help clubs to overcome obstacles and implement ERB to improve environmental performance. By identifying the current barriers to ERB, clubs can seek ways to overcome the barriers and better implement ERB.

Sustainable development is an important part of CER and crucial to clubs' long-term survival and enhanced images. When clubs perceive the importance of CER, they engage in sustainable development, and are more likely to implement ERB (Gonzalez-Benito & Gonzalez-Benito, 2005). That is, if a club has sustainable practices, it is more likely to recognize the importance of environmental issues and adopt ERB to solve environmental problems. Thus, when compared to the clubs with no sustainable practices, the clubs with sustainable practices will conduct ERB practices more effectively to improve their environmental performance. However, little research has investigated the differences between clubs with sustainable practices and those clubs without the practices on the perception of CER, current ERB practices, and perceived barriers to ERB.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to investigate ERB implementation in the club industry. To achieve the purpose of the study, the objectives were twofold: (a) to measure the managers' perceived importance of CER, current ERB practices, and main barriers to ERB

implementation, and (b) to determine if there are differences in the managers' perceived importance of CER, ERB practices, and barriers to ERB between clubs reported to conduct sustainable practices (SUS clubs) and those that reported not to conduct sustainable practices (non-SUS clubs).

### **Significance of the Study**

The service activities of clubs such as dining, and sports (e.g., golf and fitness) could be responsible for some environmental problems, including water and energy waste and air pollution (Deya Tortella & Tirado, 2011; Gossling, 2015; Kasim et al., 2014; Styles, Schoenberger, & Galvez-Martos, 2015; Wheeler & Nauright, 2006). Since little research has investigated the environmental problems caused by clubs and clubs' ERB implementation, this study fills this literature gap on the environmental problems in the club business context and draws researchers' attentions to the importance of club environmental matters.

CER could help clubs to prevent and solve environmental problems and to gain long-term survival (Delma & Toffel, 2004; Heikkurinen, 2010). It is necessary for club managers to recognize the importance of CER to implement ERB better. Therefore, the findings of the perceived importance of CER could help club managers and policymakers to recognize the club managers' perceptions on sustainability to further improve ERB implementations and the environmental performance of clubs.

In addition, the findings related to current ERB practices could indicate the current ERB status of the clubs. The results could provide club managers a to-do list to solve environmental problems and help clubs to improve their environmental performance effectively. Furthermore, the clubs could gain long-term benefits by gaining an enhanced environmental image.

The barriers to ERB have been studied in the hotel sector (Chan, 2008; Chan, 2011) while little research has focused on the club context. The present study could help clubs to recognize the significant external and internal barriers to ERB to implement ERB better. In addition, the findings of this study fill the gap caused by a dearth of studies in perceived barriers to ERB of clubs. This study further identified perceptions of club managers on obstacles to ERB and helps clubs to formulate a suitable strategy to remove those obstacles, thereby to reduce negative environmental effects.

Additionally, by measuring the different ERB practices between SUS clubs and non-SUS clubs, the findings in this study clearly identify the important factors that encourage clubs' ERB implementation and offer club managers suggestions for solving environmental problems. This could help club managers and policymakers to understand the importance of ERB comprehensively.

### **Definition of Terms**

The following terms were used for identifying environmental problems of clubs, and defining environmentally responsible behaviors of clubs:

- Club manager: the chief operating officer, who can affect or decide the development strategy of the club.
- Club: “a place where people with a common bond of some type—similar interests, experiences, backgrounds, professions, and so on—can congregate for social and recreational purposes” (Perdue, 1997, p. 3).
- Waste: Movable materials that are perceived to have no value and would not lead to problems or hazards once they were discarded (Hill, 1998).

- Pollution: The introduction of substances or energy into the environment by humans and resulting in a deleterious effect (O’Riordan, 1995).
- Corporate social responsibility (CSR): the voluntary commitment of a firm to contribute to social and environmental goals (European Commission, 2002).
- Corporate environmental responsibility (CER): the voluntary commitment of a firm to contribute to the environment (Jamison et al., 2005).
- Environmentally responsible behavior (ERB): actions that individuals or organizations implement to reduce the negative impacts on the environment (Stern, 2000).

## **CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

This chapter provides an overview of club and environmental issues in the club industry, a review of the literature on CER and ERB along with perceived importance of CER, ERB practices, and barriers to ERB.

### **Clubs**

A club is “a place where people with a common bond of some type—similar interests, experiences, backgrounds, professions, and so on—can congregate for social and recreational purposes” (Perdue, 1997, p. 3). Clubs are also places to build social networks and reproduce the social status and values of elites (Kendall, 2008). Clubs provide athletic services, including golf, tennis, swimming, fitness, and yachting (CMAA, 2014). Clubs also provide social services, such as dining and event services. One major type of club is the country club, which is based on golf service. Some clubs without golf courses are yacht, city, and athletic clubs (CMAA, 2014).

The club industry makes a significant financial contribution to the United States. The total income in 2013 of member-managed clubs in CMAA was nearly 20 billion dollars in the United States (CMAA, 2014). In addition, the labor, goods, and services spent by clubs led to \$21 billion in economic effects in 2013. Aside from the economic effects, the club industry makes contributions to society by providing jobs and paying taxes. In 2013, for example, member clubs of CMAA were responsible for the generation of 21 billion dollars in salaries, wages, purchased goods and purchased services. Specifically, salaries and wages make up the largest proportion (45%) of total economic expenditures. Clubs also provided many middle-income jobs in 2013. The median compensation in the club industry is close to

\$45,900 annually, which is slightly lower than the median income of high school teachers, \$51,371 annually (CMAA, 2014).

The club industry is an important sector in the hospitality industry. However, the club industry is an under-researched segment (Barrows & Walsh, 2002). Most of the published articles have been related to lodging and foodservice areas. Only a few studies have been conducted about the club industry; the majority of them have been focusing on club managers, the market of clubs, members, revenue management, human resources, and strategic management (Barrows & Walsh, 2002). In recent years, environmental issues have become a topic of greater interest in hospitality management; and lodging, foodservice, and tourism sectors have been shown to be responsible for serious environmental problems (Gossling, 2015). However, little research has been conducted on the environmental issues in the club industry.

### **Environmental Issues of Clubs**

Clubs popularly provide food, events, and some sports services to members. These service activities could help local societies to gain benefits in terms of positive economic effects and jobs provided. However, poor management of operation processes in clubs could lead to serious environmental issues, which could decrease the quality of living for people in the local communities, such as GHG emission, food, water waste (Gossling, 2015; Swedish Environmental Protection Agency [SEPA], 2008), and energy waste (Deng, 2003; Kasim et al., 2014).

The restaurants in clubs have been shown to be responsible for environmental problems with water, food, and energy waste, and GHG emission (Gossling, 2015; SEPA, 2008). Particularly, customers eat more food in restaurants than at home; and cooking high-



order food (meat and seafood), which generally need more water and energy than cooking vegetables, could lead to water and energy waste, and higher GHG emissions (Gossling, 2015; Gosling, Garrod, Aall, Hille, & Peeters 2011; Pirani & Arafat, 2014).

In addition, golf courses in clubs could also bring negative effects to local natural environments. During the construction period, the movement of the original landscape, such as cutting forests for more space, could lead to forest deterioration, soil erosion, and animal habitat loss. Moreover, to keep the turf in good condition to meet the entertainment needs, some clubs import grass species from other countries or regions. These foreign grass species may require more water and pesticides to survive than local grasses, which could lead to water waste, chemical pollution, and soil erosion (Wheeler & Nauright, 2006). These environmental problems caused by the construction and operation of golf courses negatively influence local residents' living environments and local biodiversity.

In recent years, customers are becoming more supportive of green products, even though they cost more, especially the consumers with high incomes (Chou & Chen, 2014; Kang, Stein, & Heo, 2012). Aside from customers' environmental concerns, some institutional organizations have also begun to pay attention to environmental issues. Environmental organizations and club industry organizations have developed regulations, principles, or programs to guide clubs to become more environmentally responsible. In 1996, the United States Golf Association published Environmental Principles for Golf Courses in the United States. These principles have been used to provide guidance for golf course planning and siting, design, construction, maintenance, and facility operations. There are also many voluntary environmental programs (VEPs) available for clubs, such as Audubon International and ISO 14001, to help clubs evaluate environmental problems and improve

environmental performance. However, there is a low and inconsistent adoption rate of VEPs in the golf sector because of lack of technology, capital, and time (Minoli & Smith, 2011).

### **Corporate Environmental Responsibility**

CER is the ecological version of CSR, referring to the voluntary commitment of a firm to contribute to social and environmental goals (European Commission, 2002).

Engaging in CSR is considered to be necessary to firms to gain long-term survival and a way to increase employee growth and retention (Branco & Rodrigues, 2006; Njite, Hancer, & Slevitch, 2011).

The concept of CER is the commitment of a firm to contribute to the environment (Jamison et al., 2005). CER has emphasized that firms should seek profits while obeying sustainable development principles (DesJardins, 1998). The most common concept of sustainable development, “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” was published in a report of by World Commission on Environment and Development (1987). The nature of CER is making sustainable development a moral principle that limits business practices and reduces harm to the ecosystem accordingly.

The engagement of CER has different levels, ranging from reactive to proactive (Carroll, 1991; Sharma, 2000). Specifically, environmental reactive levels refer to corporate activities that adhere to laws and regulations while environmental proactive levels refer to the voluntary practices, which could help to reduce firms’ negative environmental influence effectively (Carroll, 1991). Therefore, different levels of CER could lead to various environmental management practices by firms.

Engaging in CER could benefit firms by gaining support from stakeholders and improving financial performance through attracting potential customers with the CER image and cost savings (Branco & Rodrigues, 2006; Njite, Hancer, & Slevitch, 2011). It also differentiates a firm's image from competitors, encourages customer loyalty, and improves the living environment for community members (Heikkurinen, 2010). To attain these objectives, firms need to implement specific management behaviors to solve environmental problems.

The high short-term cost of CER is also a concern for firms, though CER could bring firms sustainable benefits (Branco & Rodrigues, 2006). Products produced by CER equipment and facilities and production processes cost more than non-CER products. The costs of equipment and production could lead to low-profit margins in the short term. However, according to supply-and-demand theory, there is a level of CER that could satisfy CER demands from stakeholders and maximize profits at the same time (McWilliams & Siegel, 2001). Firms should develop strategies based on consumers' willingness to pay extra money for CER products, advertising, demographics, and technological change to protect the environment while gaining long-term benefits by making good relationships with stakeholders and saving costs.

Stakeholder pressures could drive the CER of firms. Stakeholders of CER are understood as individuals or groups that practically and potentially bear risks from environmental issues caused by organizations' operation activities (Clarkson, 1995). Key stakeholders are divided into two categories: internal (team members) and external (e.g., community and competitors; Heikkurinen, 2010). Both internal and external stakeholders drive firms to CER endogenously and exogenously. A study indicated that internal

stakeholders differentiate firms from their competitors with an environmentally responsible image, even though there is no external demand for CSR from external stakeholders (Heikkurinen, 2010). Meanwhile, the managerial decision-making of CER is also affected by external pressures from governments, regulators, customers, competitors, community and environmental interest groups, and industry associations (Delmas & Toffel, 2004).

Similarly, in another study, there were different drivers of CER, which could be categorized into three levels: individual, organizational, and regulatory (Karassin & Bar-Haim, 2016). The individual level (i.e., personal values and norms of employees) has been shown to have no significant relationship to CER (Karassin & Bar-Haim, 2016). The most significant variables of CER are corporate organizational culture, and managerial attitudes and behaviors, which belong to the organizational level. Regulatory demands and stakeholder power also have strong relationships with CER engagement (Karassin & Bar-Haim, 2016). If firms perceived external pressure continuously, internal factors would synergize with external factors to lead firms to CER (Sindhi & Kumar, 2013). Nevertheless, financial resources constitute a leading factor in the CER decision-making process; if firms do not have sufficient financial resources and management capabilities, they will not engage in CER, though CER engagement could bring them future economic benefits (Clarkson, Li, Richardson, & Vasvari, 2011).

In contrast, according to institutional theory, government legislative policies have shown to be the dominant driver for CER in comparison to other drivers, such as cost savings, market advantages, brand reputations (Dummett, 2006; Sindhi & Kumar, 2012). Since one of the reasons that engaging in CER is to avoid the punishment from the governmental organizations, without government regulations, firms have no motivation to

engage in CER (Kirk, 1995). Therefore, the federal government should encourage or require firms to engage in CER instead of making it voluntary (Dummett, 2006).

In the hospitality industry, CER engagement has remained at low levels, though it has been shown that CER could positively affect hotel profits (Rodriguez & Del Mar Armas Cruz, 2007). A study indicated that hotels engage in CER for direct financial rewards, such as cost savings or avoiding punishments from governmental organizations (Kirk, 1995). Recent studies show that only a small number of firms in the hospitality industry have engaged in CER because they rarely perceived the benefits from CER; only hotels and restaurants consider CER to be profitable while other sectors in the hospitality industry did not (Kang, Lee, & Huh, 2010).

Moreover, misunderstandings about environmental management have led to hotels making poor decisions regarding CER (Mensah, 2006). Many international and chain hotel managers have perceived that environmental management is only a means to keep their surroundings clean and green for hospitality customers. However, CER should be implemented for the purposes of reducing the environmental problems and to make good relationships with stakeholders, meanwhile, to reduce the costs by saving waste (Branco & Rodrigues, 2006; DesJardins, 1998; Dummett, 2006; Njite, Hancer, & Slevitch, 2011; Sindhi & Kumar, 2012).

### **Environmentally Responsible Behavior**

ERB refers to the actions that individuals or organizations implement to reduce the negative effects on the environment (Stern, 2000). ERB could help firms to improve environmental performance, to build good relationships with stakeholders, and to fulfill their CERs. For example, environmental policy can be set up for the main operation and behavior

principles of an organization and, in turn, affect the resource allocation for CER. Therefore, ERB could be considered a measure of a firm's responsibility to the environment.

According to the aforementioned corporate environmental responsiveness levels (i.e., reactive and proactive; Carroll, 1991) and firms' environmental risks (i.e., endogenous and exogenous; Vastag, Kerekes, & Rondinelli, 1996), ERB strategies have been divided into different categories to solve both minor and serious environmental issues. Specifically, endogenous risks include the internal operations of the company (i.e., materials, technologies, and human resources used in the operating process). Exogenous risks include the firm's external environment, such as its location, ecological characteristics, and the demographics and environmental attitudes of the population.

Different ERB strategies respond to the needs of different industries. For example, some industries, such as the chemical industry, cause higher levels of pollution, which could cause negative environmental effects to communities. These firms need to exceed legal requirements for ERB to prevent and reduce environmental damage. Other industries cause lower levels of pollution and have fewer negative environmental effects. They may need to engage less in ERB.

### **Perceived Importance of CER**

Sustainability is an important part of the CER concept; the definition of sustainability emphasizes that the use of resources should meet the needs of the present while not harming the ability to meet the needs of the future generation (DesJardins, 1998; World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987). Sustainable development is a useful and important principle that could help organizations to decrease the negative environmental effects and to gain long-term survival.

Managerial perceptions and opinions could affect organizational behaviors (Papagiannakis & Lioukas, 2012; Vastag, Kerekes, & Rondinelli, 1996). How organizations perceive the importance of environmental issues and CER is crucial to the ERB implementation. When members on the managerial level are aware of the importance of CER, they will be more likely to implement ERB practices to follow the principle of sustainable development (Gadenne, Kennedy, & McKeiver, 2008; Gonzalez-Benito & Gonzalez-Benito, 2006). Therefore, the perceived importance of CER is a significant factor to ERB implementation.

### **Current ERB Practices**

ERB could be separated into two types. The first is general practices, which is implemented at the managerial level and focusing on organizational structure and general planning for CER (Gonzalez-Benito & Gonzalez-Benito, 2005). For example, hotels adopt green purchasing policies, personnel training in environmental issues, quantification of environmental costs and savings, and other organizational practices (Alvarez Gil, Burgos Jimenez, & Cespedes Lorente, 2001; Mensah, 2006). General management practices could help firms to make appropriate allocations of the resources for ERB, and to ensure that the ERB implementation is consistent.

The second is functional practices to solve specific problems. Functional practices include practices for solving waste and pollution and practices for communicating with stakeholders (Gonzalez-Benito & Gonzalez-Benito, 2005). Implementing functional practices could help firms reduce the specific negative environmental effects while reducing resource costs by recycling and saving (Brano & Rodrigues, 2006). Moreover, functional practices could also help firms to build good relationships with stakeholders.

In the hotel industry, the understanding of hotel environmental practices is limited. It has been indicated that hotels focus more on functional effects of ERB than strategic and organizational effects. Hotels are more likely to consider ERB as their cost-saving strategies (Claver-Cortes, Molina-Azorin, Pereira-Moliner, & Lopez-Gamero, 2007; Mensah, 2006; Molina-Azorin, Tari, Pereira-Moliner, Lopez-Gamero, & Pertusa-Ortega, 2015). They tend to adopt practices that save water and energy over practices that could generally improve environmental performance in the long term.

#### Planning and organizational practices

These practices include management behaviors that control and manipulate environmental issues on a strategic level. The goals of planning and organizational practices are: preventing environmental problems, establishing limits, warning of threats and identifying opportunities, and identifying new technology or policies that are useful (Barrow, 1999).

Environmental policy is a very important practice that could strongly drive the CER of firms (Shah, 2011). Environmental policy could set a clear agenda and provide guidance when clubs are making financial and other resource allocations to ERB (Mathis, 2007). In addition, through staff training and adopting environmental problems evaluation systems, firms can identify and deal with environmental issues effectively (Clarkson et al., 2011; Gonzalez-Benito & Gonzalez-Benito, 2005; Williamson & Lynch-Wood, 2001). Specifically, staff training programs could provide consistent and full human resources for ERB implementation. Moreover, leadership support is also an important part of general practices because managerial decisions could affect ERB implementation significantly (Hunt & Auster, 1990; Quazi, 2001).



VEPs engagement can provide opportunities for firms to attain professional guidance and suggestions to make sure environmental practices are effective. VEPs, which include environmental initiatives, programs, labels, code agreements, and benchmark awards, could help firms to improve environmental performance by identifying and evaluating environmental problems and making the proper environmental management practices. Moreover, some VEPs could provide communication and collaboration between firms and government agencies, as well as environmental and industry organizations (Rivera & DeLeon, 2008). However, most hotels lack a formal system of measurement, such as ISO 140001, which might lead to a more consistent adoption of environmental practices (Scanlon, 2007).

Financial support is also crucial to implement ERB. Providing financial support allows firms to experiment with new strategies, technologies, and products (Tan & Peng, 2004). However, financial support is dependent on firms' financial performance; without adequate resources, firms will not implement ERB (Clarkson et al., 2011).

#### Waste and pollution practices

Waste refers to movable materials that are perceived to have no value and would not lead to a problem or hazard once they were discarded (Hill, 2010). Pollution is defined as the introduction of substances or energy into the environment by humans, which results in a deleterious effect (O'Riordan, 1995). There are three ways to deal with waste and pollution: prevention, reclamation, and disposal (Barrow, 1999). The goal of waste and pollution management is seeking ways to prevent waste and pollution instead of reclamation and disposal (Young, 1991).

Waste and pollution practices intend to solve specific environmental problems as part of firms' operating procedures. Environmental problems include water and solid waste, air pollution, and GHG emission (Gossling, 2015; Kasim et al., 2014; Styles, Schoenberger, & Galvez-Martos, 2015). Firms could reduce resource use and pollution by using environmentally safe products, green energy, and recyclable materials (Middleton, 1995).

In the hotel sector, waste and pollution practices have been implemented to save energy and other resources and to reduce pollution emissions (Kirk, 1995; Scanlon, 2007). Hotels adopt technology and operating initiatives to save resources, such as dishwashers that recycle water, lighting retrofitted to fluorescent, and shuttle transportation for staff. Many hotels adopted practices to save energy and resources as well as to reduce air and noise pollution (Scanlon, 2007). Nevertheless, hotels do not pay much attention to recycling waste, composting food leftovers, and printing brochures on recycled paper (Mensah, 2006), which may involve increased costs for hotels.

#### Communication practices

Communication practices have been identified as an important category of ERB practices (Florida & Davison, 2001). Communication practices include developing environmental reports to customers and holding and sponsoring environmental events (Gonzalez-Benito & Gonzalez-Benito, 2005). These behaviors help to increase customers' awareness of environmental issues and CER of firms and to assess their willingness to pay extra money for higher-priced products with environmental features (McWilliams & Siegel, 2001). In addition, sponsoring environmental events is also a good way to communicate with stakeholders and learn about their needs. These behaviors could help firms to build a positive environmental image and good relationships with stakeholders by increasing consumers'

environmental awareness, improving customer loyalty, and showing firms' environmental images. In the hospitality industry, many large hotel companies communicate with stakeholders by developing CER reports. However, few provided detailed information about specific environmental practices (Grosbois, 2012).

### **Barriers to ERB**

Even though implementing ERB could benefit firms through cost savings and building a green image and good relationships with stakeholders, some managers have hesitation to implement ERB, especially the ERB beyond regulatory requirements (Cordano & Frieze, 2000). Barriers to ERB refer to obstacles that could lead to negative outcomes and no benefits to firms (Hillary, 2004). These barriers need to be overcome during the implementation of ERB.

There are two main types of barriers: internal and external (Hillary, 2004; Murillo-Luna, Garces-Ayerbe, & Rivera-Torres, 2011). Specifically, internal barriers are firm-specific factors, which hinder environmental protection but can be controlled by assigning the necessary resources. External barriers refer to the obstacles raised outside the firm that discourage firms from implementing ERB.

#### Internal barriers

Internal barriers include negative perceptions and experiences with ERB and a lack of knowledge and skills (Hillary, 2004). Implementing ERB requires human resources and might interrupt the regular work process. This could lead to employees losing the momentum to complete their regular work and, in turn, to make firms be hesitant to implement ERB.

Costs to implement ERB could lead to product price increases. Chan (2011), for example, found that the perceived costs for ERB implementation were the main internal

barrier to ERB in the hotel industry (Chan, 2011). In addition, customers may not be willing to pay extra money for CER products (Biswas, 2016; Lewis & Cassells, 2010). However, customers' willingness to pay for CER products is crucial to the CER of firms (Hillary, 2004).

Marketing to eco-conscious consumers could help to improve the CER of firms (Shah, 2011). However, most consumers do not value CER (Molina-Azorin et al., 2015). If customers are not aware of the benefits of products with fewer environmental effects, they will not be willing to pay more for products with green attributes.

Managerial attitude toward ERB is a significant factor that decides the managerial intentions to implement ERB (Papagiannakis & Lioukas, 2012). However, negative experiences could negatively affect managerial attitude toward ERB and make firms be less predisposed to ERB implementation. In addition, since understanding and developing CER strategies requires adequate knowledge about the environment and skills to implement CER practices, a lack of knowledge and skills negatively affects firms' ability to implement ERB; it also hurts the confidence of firms regarding decision making for environmental strategies (Chan, 2008; Stern, 2000). In the hospitality industry, lack of technical knowledge, skills, and information could negatively affect hoteliers' ability to be in touch with environmental issues and lead to hotels deriving low or no benefits from ERB (Chan, 2008; Chan, 2011; Fryxell & Lo, 2003).

#### External barriers

External barriers to ERB are mainly related to economic factor and inadequate encouragement from institutional organizations (Hillary, 2004). The changing economic fortunes could alter firms' priority of profits over environmental performance. For example,

in the club industry, the economic factor significantly affects club membership, and therefore, club income (CMAA, 2008). In addition, during periods of economic downturns, clubs need to adopt assertive and effective membership marketing strategies to attract members and keep the profits (Ferreira & Gustafson, 2014). Therefore, the economic factor could change clubs' strategies.

Moreover, institutional pressures are significant drivers of CER (Karassin & Bar-Haim, 2016). Similarly, a lack of encouragement from governmental and national organizations and economic pressures could affect firms' strategic priorities and affect ERB implementation (Dummett, 2006). These external barriers could decrease the benefits to firms of engaging in CER and impede firms' ERB implementation. In the hotel industry, a lack of national organizations' encouragement and pressures of regulation are also barriers to hotels' implementation of ERB. These barriers generally result in hotels prioritizing profit over dealing with environmental issues (Chan, 2011; Scanlon, 2007).

### **Summary**

CER is needed by both stakeholders and clubs. Clubs could implement ERB to solve environmental problems and to gain long-term survival. Community members could also benefit from clubs' CER by gaining protection for their living environments. Moreover, the perceptions of clubs on sustainability could positively affect their ERB implementation. These outcomes are significant to the long-term survival and benefits of clubs. However, there is low VEP engagement in clubs, and the current ERB practices of clubs are unknown, as well as clubs' perceptions on sustainability. Therefore, it is necessary to investigate the current ERB practices of clubs, along with clubs' perceptions on sustainability and clubs' perceived barriers to ERB.

### **CHAPTER 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This chapter introduces the research methods used to investigate clubs' ERB implementation status. The objectives of this study were: (a) to investigate clubs' perceived importance of CER, current ERB practices, and main barriers to ERB; and (b) to determine if there were differences in perceived importance of CER, current ERB practices, and main barriers to ERB between SUS and non-SUS clubs.

#### **Instruments**

The present study employed a survey that included five sections. First, sustainable practices implementation was measured by a dichotomous question, "Does your club have sustainable practices"? The response choices were 1 (yes) or 2 (no). Second, managers' perceived importance of CER was measured by four questions, (a) "How important is sustainability to your club" using a 5-point Likert scale (ranging from 1 = "Strongly disagree" to 5 = "Strongly agree"); (b) "How often does your board discuss sustainability" using a four-point Likert scale (ranging from 1 = "Never" to 4 = "Often"); (c) "Does your club have a member committee that focuses on sustainability" with response options of 1 (yes) or 2 (no); and (d) "Does your club allocate funds specifically for environmentally sustainable practices" with response options of 1 (yes) or 2 (no).

Third, the current ERB practices were measured with 15 items in three dimensions: planning and organizational practices, pollution and waste practices, and communication practices in a dichotomous question format and the response choices were 1 (yes) or 2 (no) (Gonzalez-Benito & Gonzalez-Benito, 2005; Lewis & Cassells, 2010; Table 1). Planning and organizational practices were measured using the following parameters: environmental policy, a full-time employee for ERB, VEP engagement, staff training programs, specialized

employees for ERB, financial support, leadership support, and the presence or absence of an environmental evaluation system. Pollution and waste practices were measured by assessing recyclable products and bottled water. Specifically, there were three waste and pollution practice items for clubs with golf courses, including the use of environmentally safe products, water use reduction, and energy saving for golf courses. Finally, communication practices were measured by environmental reports developed and environmental events sponsored.

Table 1

*ERB Practices*Practice Items<sup>a</sup>**Planning and organizational practices**

- Comprehensive environmental policy
- Full-time employees devoted to environmentally responsible behavior
- Engage in voluntary environmental programs
- Staff training programs for environmental practice
- Dedicated staff person for environmental practice
- Financial support for environmental practices from leadership
- Adequate evaluation systems that identify environmental problems
- Receive support from leadership for implementing environmental practices

**Waste and pollution practices***(ERB practices for clubs with golf course)*

- Use environmental safe products
- Reduce the amount of water
- Convert to all-electric fleet of vehicles

*(ERB practices for clubs with golf course)*

- Use more recyclable products
- Reduce bottled water use

**Communication practices**

- Develop environmental reports for the membership
- Sponsor environmental events in your area

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*Note:* <sup>a</sup> ERB practice items were adopted from a study by Gonzalez-Benito & Gonzalez-Benito (2005) and Lewis & Cassells (2010).

Fourth, the items used to measure managers' perceived barriers to ERB were adopted from studies conducted by Hillary (2004) and Chan (2011). Through the review with the

McMahon Group, nine barriers were identified for perceived barriers to the club industry.

The nine items consisted of internal barriers (i.e., implementation, past experiences, knowledge and skill, clubs' motivation, members' supports, and perceived cost of ERB) and external barriers (i.e., encouragement from a national organization and economic factor; Chan, 2011; Hillary, 2004; Table 2). They were measured by using 5-point Likert scales (ranging from 1 = "Strongly disagree" to 5 = "Strongly agree"). The last section includes the club profiles of club location, club type, own golf course, member size, and ownership type.

Table 2

*Barriers to ERB Implementation*

Barrier Items <sup>a</sup>
My club hesitates to implement environmentally responsible behavior as it may interrupt our work process.
My club has had a negative experience with implementing environmentally responsible behavior.
My club does not have adequate technical knowledge and skills to implement environmentally responsible behavior.
The economy alters the priority given to environmentally responsible behavior.
Our members do not care about the club operating as an environmentally responsible organization.
Our members do not want to pay more in order to be a more environmentally responsible organization.
It costs the club more money to be a more environmentally responsible organization.
Clubs have no motivation to be environmentally responsible.
The national organizations in the club industry do not encourage clubs to be environmentally responsible.

*Note:* <sup>a</sup>Barrier items were adopted from a study by Chan (2011) and Hilary (2004).

**Pilot Study**

A pilot study was conducted in March 2016 to ensure that the wording of research instruments was clear. There were four club managers, who are clients or researchers of the



McMahon Group, the largest private club and consulting firm in the United States, previewed all the items in the questionnaire. Each item was reworded to be applicative for the club industry and to make sure club managers could understand all the items. For example, the original practices item “systems for measuring and assessing environmental performance” was revised as “engage in voluntary environmental programs”.

### **Sampling**

The population of this study is United States clubs. This study adopted a convenience sampling method to collect data from clubs with the help of the McMahon Group. The company has 3,250 members of clubs, including country clubs, golf clubs, city clubs, dining clubs, athletic clubs, racquet clubs, swim and tennis clubs, yacht clubs, and others.

### **Data Collection**

Qualtrics was used as an online survey tool to collect data. A questionnaire was emailed to 3,250 clubs. The consent is exempt by institutional review board. The survey started on April 26, 2016 and was closed on May 30, 2016. A survey incentive was used to increase response rates. Each participant had a chance to win a \$100 pre-paid gift card paid by McMahon Group. When the survey closed, five club managers, who participated the survey, were randomly chosen by McMahon Group. A total of 407 club managers completed the survey, yielding a response rate of 12.52%. However, 110 responses were excluded because they did not answer to the 80% of the survey items (e.g., perceived importance of CER, ERB practices, barriers to ERB and club profiles). One response was removed because it was not located in North America. After removing surveys for missing data, 296 responses were identified to be valid for further data analysis, yielding a usable response rate of 9.11%.

### Data Analysis

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, version 24, was used to conduct a frequency analysis of the clubs' profiles, perceived importance of CER, ERB practices, and barriers to ERB.

Table 3 shows the data analysis methods in this study. Independent samples *t*-tests were conducted to compare the differences on perceived importance of sustainability, the frequency of discussion on sustainability, and perceived barriers to ERB between SUS clubs and non-SUS clubs. Chi-square tests were conducted to find the differences on sustainable member committees, funds allocations, and current ERB practices between SUS clubs and non-SUS clubs.

Table 3

#### *Data Analysis Methods*

Independent samples <i>t</i> -tests	Chi square tests
Perceived importance of sustainability	Member committees for sustainability
Frequency of discussion on sustainability	Funds allocation for sustainability
Perceived barriers to ERB	Current ERB practices

#### **Assumption Check**

Five assumptions for the independent *t* tests were checked in this study (Table 4). First, the independent variable was a categorical variable with two subgroups (SUS-clubs and non-SUS clubs). Second, the dependent variables are continuous variables, including perceived importance of sustainability (5-point Likert scale), frequency of discussion of sustainability (4-point Likert scale), and perceived barriers to ERB (5-point Likert scales). Third, the participants received the survey via their email accounts and completed the survey

independently, therefore the assumption of independence was met. Fourth, Levene's test was utilized to check the assumption of homogeneity of variance (Table 4). All the  $p$  values of the Levene's tests were larger than .005, which fail to reject the null hypothesis that the two groups had the same variance (Norusis, 2008). Lastly, Shapiro-Wilk tests were conducted to check if the data were normally distributed (Table 5). While the results showed that data did not meet the assumption of normality, the sample size of the two groups were reasonable large ( $n \geq 15$ ). Therefore, independent samples t-tests were used in this study (Harnett & Murphy, 1980). For chi-square tests, the data met the assumptions of independence and large sample size.

Table 4

*Assumptions for Independent Samples T-Tests*

Dependent variables	Levene's test	Skewness (statistic/SD)	Kurtosis (statistic/SD)	Shapiro-Wilk test
Perceived importance of sustainability	5.86	.23 (.15)	-.17 (.29)	.84*
Frequency of discussion on sustainability	3.54	-.027 (.15)	-.74 (.29)	.23*
Perceived high cost of ERB	3.94	-.52 (.15)	-.11 (.29)	.31*
Inadequate members' willingness to pay	.91	.08 (.15)	-.61 (.29)	.21*
Inadequate technical knowledge and skills	.31	-.40 (.15)	-.27 (.29)	.29*
Interruptive nature of ERB	3.89	.55 (.15)	.12 (.29)	.34*
No motivation to ERB	6.45	.78 (.15)	.57 (.29)	.32*
Members do not care about ERB	2.48	-.34 (.15)	.43 (.29)	.31*
Negative experiences with ERB	.78	.71 (.15)	.74 (.29)	.34*
Changing economy alteration	1.01	-.45 (.15)	-.61 (.29)	.26*
Inadequate encouragement from national organizations	4.19	.29 (.15)	.30 (.29)	.25*

Note: \* $p < .001$

## CHAPTER 4. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

This chapter reports the results of the analysis. The results include the respondent profiles, descriptive data on perceived importance of sustainability, current ERB practices and barriers to ERB. The results of independent samples *t*-tests and chi-square tests are also included.

### Respondent Profiles

From the results of the frequency analysis (Table 5), 92.57% of clubs were located in the United States, 7.43% were located in Canada.

Table 5

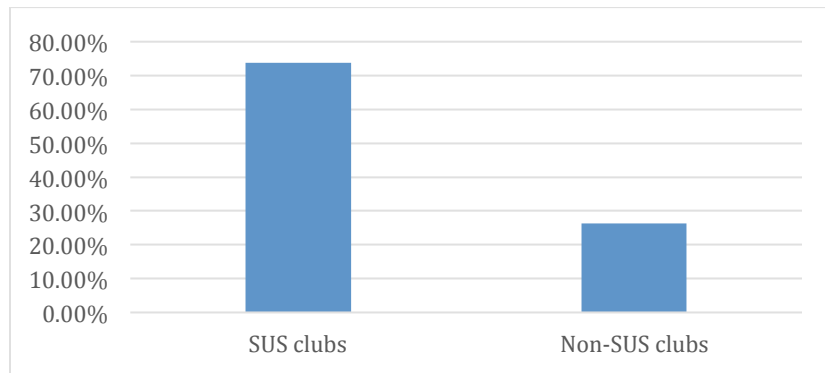
#### *Club Profiles*

Items		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Country	US	274	92.57
	Canada	22	7.43
Club type	Country Club	176	59.90
	Golf Club	43	14.60
	City/Dining/Athletic Club	26	8.80
	Yacht Club	18	6.10
	Swim and Tennis Club	8	2.70
	Racquet Club	4	1.40
	Other	19	6.50
Own Golf course	Yes	220	76.70
	No	67	23.30
Members	251 to 500	114	38.60
	501 to 750	57	19.30
	250 or less	33	11.20
	751 to 1,000	33	11.20
	More than 1,500	30	11.20
	1,001 to 1,500	29	9.80
Ownership	Member-owned	264	88.90
	Developer	12	4.10
	Management Company	8	2.70
	Other	13	4.40

The main club type was country club (59.90%), followed by golf clubs (14.60%). City/dining/athletic clubs and yacht clubs made up 8.80% and 6.10% respectively. The finding that 76.70% of the clubs owned golf courses is consistent with the 2014 economic impact report of CMAA (2014). Approximately 50% of clubs had fewer than 500 members, 30% of clubs had 501 to 1,000 members, and approximately 20% of clubs had more than 1,001 members. About 90% of clubs were member-owned, 4.10% were owned by a developer, and 2.70% clubs operated by management companies.

### **Sustainability Engagement**

As shown in Figure 1, among 296 clubs, 219 (73.99%) reported that they had sustainable practices, which means they engaged in CER, and 77 (26.01%) clubs did not. Based on the sustainable practices, two groups were created: clubs with sustainable practices (i.e., SUS clubs) and clubs without sustainable practices (i.e., non-SUS clubs).



*Figure 1.* Percentages of SUS clubs and non-SUS clubs.

### **Perceived Importance of CER**

The perceived importance of sustainability was measured by the importance of sustainability, the frequency of discussions on sustainability in board meetings, member committee setting for sustainability, and fund allocations for sustainability. Table 6 shows the results of independent samples *t*-tests, which were conducted to compare the group

differences in the perceived importance of sustainability and the frequency of discussions on sustainability between SUS clubs and non-SUS clubs.

First, most of the club managers perceived sustainability as very important (22.20%) or important (48.10%); 27.6% of them rated the importance of sustainability as neutral; 1.70% and 0.30% clubs respectively considered sustainability to be unimportant or very unimportant to their clubs. Table 6 shows the results of independent samples *t*-tests, which indicated that SUS clubs considered sustainability more important than non-SUS clubs did ( $t(291) = 6.54, p < .001$ ).

Table 6

*Perceived Importance of Sustainability and the Frequency of Discussions on Sustainability*

Items	<i>M (SD)</i>		<i>t</i> -value
	non-SUS clubs	SUS clubs	
How important is sustainability to your club? <sup>a</sup>	3.44 (0.75)	4.07 (0.71)	6.54*
How often does your board discuss sustainability? <sup>b</sup>	1.71 (0.89)	2.59 (0.74)	-8.39*

*Note.* <sup>a</sup>1: very unimportant ~ 5: very important. <sup>b</sup>1-never; 2-rarely; 3-sometimes; 4-often.

\* $p < .001$

Regarding the frequency of discussion on sustainability in board meetings, in general, only 8.10% of clubs often discussed sustainability in their board meetings, and 37.30% sometimes did, while 36.40% and 18.00% of clubs rarely or never discussed sustainability. The result of an independent samples *t*-test revealed that SUS clubs discussed environmental sustainability far more frequently than non-SUS clubs did ( $t(293) = -8.39, p < .001$ ; Table 6).

Regarding the member committee and funds allocation for sustainability, approximately 92.6% of club managers reported that they did not have a member committee that focused on sustainability while only 7.4% of clubs had. Only 15.2% of clubs allocated

funds specifically for sustainability while the rest of the clubs did not. The results of chi-square tests show that there were significantly more SUS clubs that had committees assigned for sustainability ( $\chi^2 (1, N = 296) = 8.50, p < .001$ ) and funds allocated for sustainability ( $\chi^2 (1, N = 294) = 12.83, p < .001$ ) than non-SUS clubs (Table 7).

Table 7

*Chi-Square Tests for Member Committee and Funds Allocation for Sustainability*

Items		non-SUS clubs	SUS clubs	$\chi^2 (1)$
Does your club have a member committee that focuses on sustainability?	No	78 (100%)	196 (89.90%)	8.50*
	Yes	0 (0%)	22 (10.10%)	
Does your club allocate funds specifically for environmentally sustainable practices?	No	76 (97.40%)	174 (80.60%)	12.83*
	Yes	2 (2.60%)	42 (19.40%)	

*Note.* \* $p < .001$ .

Overall, the findings indicate that SUS clubs considered sustainability more important and had more discussions at board meetings than non-SUS clubs did. In addition, more SUS clubs set specialized ERB committees and allocated funds for sustainable practices than non-SUS clubs did.

### **Current ERB Practices**

Current ERB practices were measured with 15 dichotomous questions in three areas: planning and organizational practices, pollution and waste practices, and communication practices. Chi-square tests were used to test group differences on the three kinds of ERB practices between SUS clubs and non-SUS clubs.

#### **Planning and Organizational Practices**

The results of planning and organizational practices are listed in Table 8. Overall, over 50% of clubs reported that leadership support (56.10%), staff training programs for ERB (55.70%), and VEP engagement (55.40%) were mostly adopted as planning and

organizational practices, followed by financial support (39.50%), adequate evaluation systems for environmental problems (33.40%), comprehensive environmental policies (17.90%), hired full-time employees (17.20%), and hired dedicated staff people for ERB (11.10%).

Table 8

*Planning and Organizational Practices*

Items		non-SUS clubs	SUS clubs	$\chi^2 (1)$
Receive support from leadership for implementing environmental practices (56.10%)	No	66 (84.60%)	64 (29.40%)	71.22**
	Yes	12 (15.40%)	154 (70.60%)	
Staff training programs for environmental practices (55.70%)	No	65 (84.40%)	64 (29.50%)	69.62**
	Yes	12 (15.60%)	153 (70.50%)	
Engage in voluntary environmental programs (e.g., Audubon Society) (55.40%)	No	58 (74.40%)	73 (33.60%)	38.53**
	Yes	20 (25.60%)	144 (66.40%)	
Financial support for environmental practices from leadership (39.50%)	No	70 (89.70%)	109 (50.00%)	37.96**
	Yes	8 (10.30%)	109 (50.00%)	
Adequate evaluation systems that identify environmental problems (33.40%)	No	72 (93.50%)	124 (56.90%)	34.23**
	Yes	5 (6.50%)	94 (43.10%)	
Comprehensive environmental policy (17.90%)	No	76 (97.40%)	166 (76.50%)	17.07**
	Yes	2 (2.60%)	51 (23.50%)	
Full-time employees devoted to environmentally responsible behavior (17.20%)	No	74 (94.90%)	171 (78.40%)	10.88*
	Yes	4 (5.10%)	47 (21.60%)	
Dedicated staff person for environmental practices (11.10%)	No	77 (98.70%)	186 (85.30%)	10.41*
	Yes	1 (1.30%)	32 (14.70%)	

Note. \* $p < .01$ . \*\* $p < .001$ .

Chi-square tests revealed that more SUS clubs conducted most planning and organizational practices than did non-SUS clubs. The practices included leadership support ( $\chi^2 (1, N = 296) = 71.22, p < .001$ ), staff training programs ( $\chi^2 (1, N = 296) = 69.62, p < .001$ ), engagement in voluntary environmental programs ( $\chi^2 (1, N = 296) = 38.53, p < .001$ ), financial support ( $\chi^2 (1, N = 296) = 37.96, p < .001$ ), adequate evaluation systems ( $\chi^2 (1, N = 296) = 34.23, p < .001$ ), comprehensive environmental policies ( $\chi^2 (1, N = 296) = 17.07, p < .001$ ), full-time employees devoted to environmentally responsible behavior ( $\chi^2 (1, N = 296) = 10.88, p < .01$ ), and dedicated staff person for environmental practices ( $\chi^2 (1, N = 296) = 10.41, p < .01$ ).



.001), full-time employees ( $\chi^2 (1, N = 296) = 10.88, p = .003$ ), and dedicated staff for ERB ( $\chi^2 (1, N = 296) = 10.41, p = .001$ ).

### Waste and Pollution Practices

Table 9 presents the results of pollution and waste practices that are measured by the practices for clubs with golf courses and the practices for all types of clubs. The most adopted practice for clubs with golf courses was the use of environmentally safe products on the golf course (91.80%), followed by water savings on golf courses (83.60%), and converting to an all-electric fleet of vehicles (38.80%).

Table 9

#### *Waste and Pollution Practices*

		non-SUS clubs	SUS clubs	$\chi^2 (1)$
<i>ERB practices for clubs with golf course</i>				
Use environmentally safe products on the golf course/grounds (91.80%)	No	9 (14.50%)	9 (5.70%)	4.61*
	Yes	53 (85.50%)	149 (94.30%)	
Reduced the amount of water on the golf course/grounds (83.60%)	No	21 (33.90%)	15 (9.60%)	19.13***
	Yes	41 (66.10%)	142 (90.40%)	
Converted to all-electric fleet of vehicles (38.80%)	No	40 (64.50%)	94 (59.90%)	0.40
	Yes	22 (35.50%)	63 (40.10%)	
<i>ERB practices for all clubs</i>				
Use more recyclable products compared to a year ago (73%)	No	35 (47.30%)	36 (16.90%)	27.25***
	Yes	39 (52.70%)	177 (83.10%)	
Reduced use of bottled water compared to a year ago (40.90%)	No	56 (76.70%)	109 (51.20%)	14.53**
	Yes	17 (23.30%)	104 (48.80%)	

Note. \* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

Chi-square tests reveals that more SUS clubs that have golf courses reported that they used environmentally safe products on golf courses ( $\chi^2 (1, N = 220) = 4.61, p = .044$ ) and reduced water use on golf course ( $\chi^2 (1, N = 219) = 19.13, p < .001$ ) than non-SUS clubs did.

However, there were no significant differences concerning converting to an all-electric fleet of vehicles between the SUS clubs and non-SUS clubs with golf courses.

For all clubs, the most adopted practice was the use of recyclable products (73%), followed by reducing bottled water use (40.90%). From the results of chi-square tests, more SUS clubs used recyclable products ( $\chi^2 (1, N = 276) = 27.25, p < .001$ ) and reduced the use of bottled water ( $\chi^2 (1, N = 271) = 14.53, p = .001$ ) than non-SUS clubs did.

### Communication Practices

The results of communication practices are presented in Table 10. Fewer than 20% of clubs reported developing environmental reports and sponsoring environmental events as communication practices. Chi-square tests revealed that more SUS clubs implemented communication practices of developing environmental reports ( $\chi^2 (1, N = 296) = 9.06, p < .001$ ) and sponsoring environmental events ( $\chi^2 (1, N = 296) = 11.24, p = .001$ ) than non-SUS clubs did.

Table 10

#### *Communication Practices*

Items		non-SUS clubs	SUS clubs	$\chi^2 (1)$
Develop environmental reports for the membership (18.90%)	No	72 (92.3%)	164 (76.60%)	9.06**
	Yes	6 (7.7%)	50 (23.40%)	
Sponsor environmental events in your area (17.20%)	No	74 (94.90%)	167 (78.00%)	11.24*
	Yes	4 (5.10%)	47 (22.00%)	

*Note.* \* $p < .01$ . \*\* $p < .001$ .

Overall, the findings indicated that SUS clubs implemented more ERB practices in terms of planning and organizational management, pollution and waste control, and communication with stakeholders than non-SUS clubs did.

### **Barriers to ERB**

The perceived barriers to ERB were measured with seven internal items and two external items. Independent samples *t*-tests were conducted to compare the differences on the nine barrier items between SUS clubs and non-SUS clubs.

#### **Internal Barriers**

Table 11 presents the results of frequency analysis of internal barriers. The most significant internal barrier was perceived cost of ERB ( $M = 3.55$ ), followed by lack of customers' willingness to pay ( $M = 3.20$ ), inadequate knowledge and skill ( $M = 2.47$ ), clubs' concerns about the interruptive nature of ERB ( $M = 2.33$ ), lack of clubs' motivation to implement ERB ( $M = 2.31$ ), lack of members' care about clubs' CER ( $M = 2.27$ ), and club's negative experience with ERB ( $M = 2.19$ ).

Independent samples *t*-tests revealed that non-SUS clubs reported higher perceived internal barriers, including members' low willingness to pay for ERB ( $t(294) = 2.58, p = .01$ ), inadequate technical knowledge and skills to implement ERB practices ( $t(294) = 6.88, p < .001$ ), concern about the interruptive nature of ERB ( $t(293) = 3.74, p < .001$ ), lack of motivation to implement ERB ( $t(292) = 4.56, p < .001$ ), and lack of members' care about ERB ( $t(293) = 6.57, p < .001$ ), compared to SUS clubs. However, there were no differences regarding negative experiences with ERB implementation and the perceived costs of ERB between SUS clubs and non-SUS clubs.

Table 11

*Perceived Internal Barriers to ERB*

Items	<i>M (SD)</i>			<i>t</i> -value
	Total	non-SUS clubs	SUS clubs	
It costs the club more money to be a more environmentally responsible organization.	3.55 (.80)	3.53 (.68)	3.56 (.84)	-.30
Our members do not want to pay more in order to be a more environmentally responsible organization.	3.20 (.94)	3.44 (.83)	3.12 (.96)	2.58*
My club does not have adequate technical knowledge and skills to implement environmentally responsible behavior.	2.47 (.83)	2.99 (.78)	2.29 (.76)	6.88**
My club hesitates to implement environmentally responsible behavior as it may interrupt our work process.	2.33 (.75)	2.60 (.77)	2.23 (.72)	3.74**
Clubs have no motivation to be environmentally responsible.	2.31 (.87)	2.69 (.91)	2.18 (.82)	4.56**
Our members do not care about the club operating as an environmentally responsible organization.	2.27 (.73)	2.71 (.70)	2.11 (.68)	6.57**
My club has had a negative experience with implementing environmentally responsible behavior.	2.19 (.77)	2.31 (.71)	2.15 (.78)	1.55

*Note.* \* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .001$

**External Barriers**

Table 12 presents the results of frequency analysis and *t*-tests about external barriers regarding economy alternation ( $M = 3.21$ ) and lack of encouragement from national organizations ( $M = 2.61$ ).

Non-SUS clubs reported significantly higher scores on both items of economy alternation ( $t(292) = 2.05, p = .041$ ) and lack of encouragement from national organizations ( $t(294) = 3.33, p = .001$ ) than SUS clubs did.

Table 12

*Perceived External Barriers to ERB*

Items	<i>M (SD)</i>			<i>t</i> -value
	Total	non-SUS clubs	SUS clubs	
The economy alters the priority given to environmentally responsible behavior.	3.21 (.88)	3.38 (.81)	3.15 (.89)	2.05*
The national organizations in the club industry do not encourage clubs to be environmentally responsible.	2.61 (.75)	2.85 (.72)	2.52 (.74)	3.33**

*Note.* \* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$

Overall, non-SUS clubs reported more barriers to ERB both internally and externally than SUS clubs did. In addition, the perceived high cost of ERB was the most significant internal barrier to both SUS clubs and non-SUS clubs.

### Summary

The results indicated that SUS clubs perceived the sustainability was more important than non-SUS clubs did, in terms of more discussions about sustainability, set ERB committee focused on sustainability, and allocated funds for sustainability. SUS clubs implemented more planning and organizational practices, pollution and waste practices, and communicational practices than non-SUS clubs did. Finally, non-SUS clubs perceived more both internal and external barriers to ERB than SUS clubs did.

## **CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

This chapter discusses the conclusions that were drawn from the major findings of this study. Implications of the study and directions for future research are also provided. There are four sections of this chapter: discussion of the findings, conclusion, practical implications and limitations and future research.

### **Discussion of Findings**

This study investigated the perceived importance of CER, the current ERB practices in clubs, and perceived barriers to ERB, and compared the group differences between SUS clubs and non-SUS clubs concerning the above areas. Overall, SUS clubs, which engaged in CER, perceived the CER to be more important, adopted more ERB practices, and indicated fewer barriers to ERB than non-SUS clubs, which do not engage in CER.

#### **Perceived Importance of CER**

The perceived importance of the CER of clubs was measured by perceived importance of sustainability, the frequency of discussions on sustainability in board meetings, ERB committees for the sustainability, and fund allocations for the sustainability.

The findings indicated that SUS clubs perceived the sustainability to be more important, had more discussions on sustainability at board meetings, included specialized ERB committees, and allocated funds for SUS practices more so than non-SUS clubs. Generally, SUS clubs perceived the CER to be more important than non-SUS clubs did. This result was consistent with the findings of previous studies, which revealed that when managers are aware of the importance of CER, they are more likely to implement ERB to reduce the negative environmental effects (Dibrell, Craig, & Hansen, 2011; Gonzalez-Benito & Gonzalez-Benito, 2006).

### **Current ERB Practices**

ERB practices of clubs were measured by practices in three different dimensions, including planning and organizational practices, waste and pollution practices, and communication practices. The differences between SUS clubs and non-SUS clubs on implementing those three kinds of practices were compared by chi-square tests.

According to the findings of planning and organizational practices, engagement in VEPs (e.g., Audubon Society and ISO140001) was a widely-adopted practice. In addition, more than half of the clubs received leadership support for ERB, which could help to keep the consistent implementation of ERB. Staff training programs were also a widely-adopted practice in this study, which could help clubs to get full human resources for ERB. Nevertheless, few clubs adopted an comprehensive environmental policy. This result is consistent with the previous study that found many hotels did not apply environmental policy (Scanlon, 2007). An adequate evaluation system was also not widely adopted. According to previous studies, an evaluation system could help clubs to identify and deal with environmental issues effectively (Gonzalez-Benito & Gonzalez-Benito, 2005; Williamson & Lynch-Wood, 2001). Lacking such an evaluation system could lead clubs to ignore those environmental problems. In addition, hiring a dedicated staff person, full-time employees for ERB, and receiving financial support for ERB from leadership were adopted by few clubs. One of the reasons might be these practices could increase costs for clubs; clubs also did not want to spend extra money for ERB, and this situation is similar to that of hotels (Mensah, 2006).

Clubs' waste and pollution practices were measured by the practice items for clubs with golf courses and the items for all types of clubs. Regarding the findings of practices for

clubs with golf courses, the majority of clubs reduced water use on their courses. According to a previous study, water-saving is also a popular practice to save waste and cost in the hotel industry (Scanlon, 2007). These findings imply that organizations in the hospitality industry have been aware of the importance of saving waste. Using environmentally safe products on golf courses was also widely adopted. However, fewer clubs converted the vehicles to an all-electric fleet. Regarding the practices for all types of clubs, the majority of clubs used recyclable products and almost half of the clubs reduced the use of bottled water.

From the findings about communication practices, few clubs developed environmental reports to members. According to a previous study, CER reports have been widely adopted by large hotel companies to show the environmental images to their customers and stakeholders (Grosbois, 2012). To build relationships with stakeholders and marketing their environmental images, clubs should develop more environmental reports to members and other stakeholders. The findings also indicate that few clubs sponsored environmental events. Sponsoring environmental events could cost clubs more money, and this could be the barrier for clubs to engage in this practice. The findings of communication practices imply that clubs did not realize the importance of communication with stakeholders and did not want to spend more money on implementing communication practices.

This study also compared the current ERB practices between SUS clubs and non-SUS clubs. Chi-square tests indicated that more SUS clubs engaged in comprehensive environmental policy, which could help SUS clubs to implement ERB consistently through setting a clear agenda and providing guidance when clubs are making financial and other resource allocations to ERB (Mathis, 2007; Shah, 2011). Moreover, more SUS clubs engaged in VEPs, adopted an adequate evaluation system and staff training program, and hired



dedicated staff persons and full-time employees for ERB than non-SUS clubs. These practices could help clubs to attain professional guidance, to identify environmental problems, and to receive enough human resources to ERB. In addition, more SUS clubs received support from leadership to implement ERB. Compared with non-SUS clubs, more SUS clubs provided financial support to ERB, which is a crucial factor keeping organizations engaged in CER (Clarkson et al., 2011).

Waste and pollution practices were also implemented more widely in SUS clubs. More SUS clubs with golf courses reduced water use and used more environmentally safe products on the golf courses. However, fewer clubs, either SUS clubs or non-SUS clubs, converted the vehicles to an all-electric fleet. This finding implies that clubs were concerned with the high cost of converting vehicles. Regarding the practices for all types of clubs, more SUS clubs reduced bottled water use and used more products that were recyclable than non-SUS clubs did. These findings imply that SUS clubs focused on preventing waste and pollution before they came to be environmental problems, comparing with non-SUS clubs.

The results of chi-square tests also indicated that more SUS clubs conducted communication practices than non-SUS clubs did, including developed environmental reports to members and sponsored environmental events. These findings imply that more SUS clubs realized the importance of communication with stakeholders.

Generally, the findings revealed that SUS clubs implemented more ERB practices than non-SUS clubs did, regarding planning and organizational practices, pollution and waste practices, and communication practices. These results showed that SUS clubs, which perceived the importance of CER and followed the sustainable development principles, would implement more various ERB practices to reduce the negative environmental effects

than non-SUS clubs did (Gadenne, Kennedy, & McKeiver, 2008; Gonzalez-Benito & Gonzalez-Benito, 2006).

In addition, the findings also reveal that both SUS clubs and non-SUS clubs engaged in waste and pollution practices. However, fewer non-SUS clubs adopted planning and organizational practices and communication practices than SUS clubs. These findings also imply that non-SUS clubs were more likely to implement ERB as cost saving strategies or as a means to solve pollution and waste problems (Molina-Azorin et al., 2015; Claver-Cortes et al., 2007; Mensah, 2006; Scanlon, 2007). Moreover, comparing with non-SUS clubs, SUS clubs implemented ERB at the strategic level, in terms of implementing more planning and organizational practices as well as communication practices.

### **Barriers to ERB**

Perceived barriers to ERB of clubs were measured by seven internal barrier items and two external barrier items. The findings indicated that SUS clubs perceived fewer barriers, both internal and external, than non-SUS clubs with regard to implementing ERB.

According to the results of frequency analysis, the perceived high cost of ERB was the highest agreed barrier to ERB. This finding is consistent with a previous study suggesting cost is the main barrier that prevents hotels from adopting environmental management (Chan, 2011). Members' willingness to pay extra money for clubs' CER was also highly agreed to be a barrier. This result showed that when clubs lack the financial and behavioral support of their membership, they tend to prioritize profits over their environmental performance (Chan, 2011; Clarkson et al., 2011; Scanlon, 2007).

However, clubs considered some barriers to be neutral, including the interruptive nature of ERB, inadequate technical knowledge and skills, inadequate motivation to ERB,

and lack of care about ERB by members. These findings indicated that clubs did not perceive those barriers could seriously hurt their regular operation process and their benefits, as well as their willingness to conduct ERB. Clubs also did not perceive negative experiences as a barrier to ERB. This finding is different from previous research suggesting that negative experiences could negatively affect managerial attitude toward ERB (Papagiannakis & Lioukas, 2012).

CMAA suggested the changing economy could affect club membership and clubs' incomes (CMAA, 2008). Similarly, in this study, the economic factor is a highly agreed external barrier to ERB for clubs. This finding was consistent with two previous studies, which revealed the economic downturn could alter clubs' priorities of marketing strategies (Dummett, 2006; Ferreira & Gustafson, 2014). In addition, an economic downturn could lead clubs to have few financial resources to deal with environmental problems; even though they perceived the pressures from stakeholders, they would not spend more money and time to implement ERB practices (Clarkson et al., 2011).

Moreover, perceived few encouragements from national organizations were indicated as a significant factor to ERB implementation in organizations (Chan, 2011; Scanlon, 2007). However, in this study, clubs did not perceive inadequate national organization encouragement could seriously impede their ERB. This finding is different from research suggesting the lack of encouragement from governmental and national organizations could affect firms' ERB implementation (Dummett, 2006). This finding implies that clubs' engagement of CER was not to avoid punishment from national organizations (Kirk, 1995).

This study compared the differences in perceived internal barriers between SUS clubs and non-SUS clubs. Non-SUS clubs had more concerns about the lack of members' care

about ERB and willingness to pay, inadequate technical knowledge and skills, the interruptive nature of ERB, and inadequate motivation to ERB than SUS clubs. These findings could indicate that SUS clubs, which engaged in CER, perceived fewer barriers, and this could be the reason that more SUS clubs adopted ERB practices than non-SUS clubs did.

The findings also indicated that there was no difference between SUS clubs and non-SUS clubs regarding the barriers of the perceived high cost of ERB. From previous research, the high cost was also a significant barrier to hotels' environmental management (Chan, 2011; Graci, 2008). Perceived high cost of ERB is considered to be the factor hurting the short-term profits of clubs, which is also the shortage of CER.

According to the result of an independent samples *t*-test, non-SUS clubs were more concerned with the alternation effects of the changing economy. Therefore, the economic factor is a significant barrier that prevents non-SUS clubs from conducting ERB practices, in comparison to SUS clubs. Moreover, the findings also indicate that non-SUS clubs perceived less encouragement from national organizations than SUS clubs did; SUS clubs perceived more pressures from the national organizations than non-SUS clubs did, and they implemented more ERB practices. This result implies that institutional pressure is a significant external pressure for clubs to engage in CER (Delmas & Toffel, 2004; Kirk, 1995).

## **Conclusion**

### **Conceptual Contribution**

Previous studies have investigated ERB practices in the hospitality industry, specifically focusing on the hotel sector (Graci 2008; Mensah, 2006; Scanlon, 2007). However, few studies addressed environmental issues and managers' perceptions on ERB in

the club business. The current study investigated the perceived importance of CER, current ERB practices, and perceived barriers to ERB at clubs. The findings discussed the current status and issues toward the environmental concerns in the club industry. Therefore, this study makes a notable contribution to fill this gap in the literature, and draw researchers' attentions to the environmental issues and the environmental management of clubs.

In recent years, hospitality studies have paid attention to the club industry, where the majority research topics include marketing strategies, human resources, and profit management (Barrows & Walsh, 2002). The field of environmental management at clubs has not thoroughly been researched. The current study investigated ERB implementation and the issues of environmental management in the club industry, thus, highlighting environmental management at clubs, and contributing to the literature.

In this study, clubs' perceived importance of CER was investigated. The results indicated that when compared to non-SUS clubs, SUS clubs perceived CER to be more important by paying attentions to sustainability, having more discussions on sustainability at board meetings, setting specialized ERB committees, and allocating funds for SUS practices. These findings indicate that when clubs perceive CER to be important, they engage in sustainability, and allocate funds to the sustainability, and in turn, implement more ERB practices. Therefore, this study contributes to the literature by proving the crucial role of perceived importance of CER in understanding the business sustainable practices.

Moreover, this study investigated the ERB practices of clubs in three different dimensions: planning and organizational practices, waste and pollution practices and communicational practices. Most studies focused on the two areas of waste and pollution problems (Scanlon, 2007), and management issues (Alvarez Gil, Burgos Jimenez, &

Cespedes Lorente, 2001; Mensah, 2006). By including communication practices in addition to the two areas, this study offers a more comprehensive perspective in understanding ERB practices. These findings expand the literature of ERB practices in various dimensions in the club industry.

While the perceived barriers to ERB has not been explored yet, this study investigated the perceived barriers in the club industry in two perspectives: internal and external. The results indicated that the barriers related to the profits of clubs were the main barriers to clubs' ERB, including perceived high cost of ERB and members' low willingness to pay, and economic factors. The findings of this study provide a comprehensive view in understanding potential barriers to ERB of clubs. Thus, this study contributes to expanding the literature on clubs' perceived barriers to the implementation of ERB practices.

In addition, the findings of this study indicated that when compared with non-SUS clubs, SUS clubs perceived CER to be more important, conducted more ERB practices and perceived fewer barriers to ERB. These findings imply that when clubs perceive CER to be important, they conduct more ERB practices and perceive less barriers to ERB. The findings of this study also indicate that non-SUS clubs were more likely to be impeded by internal and external barriers to ERB. As a result, non-SUS clubs implemented fewer ERB practices than SUS clubs did. Thus, this study provides a comprehensive view of ERB status and concerns about environmental management between SUS clubs and non-SUS clubs. These findings provide a holistic view of the roles of sustainability engagement, perceived importance of CER, and perceived barriers, which are helpful to understanding the implementation of ERB practices.

## **Practical Implications**

The perceived importance of CER was identified to be critical to the ERB implementation of clubs. This finding suggests that clubs should engage in sustainable practices in order to recognize environmental issues, and understand the importance of CER. In addition, the boards of clubs should hold more discussions on sustainability, so that they could draw the attentions on the current environmental issues. If clubs are able to allocate more funding to improve their sustainability, their perceived importance of CER might be higher, and the implementation of ERB practices could be improved as well.

The findings in this study revealed that, in general, fewer clubs conducted planning and organizational practices and communication practices, while more clubs conducted waste and pollution practices. Moreover, implementing planning and organizational practices could help clubs to set clear environmental principles and make sure clubs consistently implement ERB. Thus, clubs should implement more planning and organizational practices by allocating necessary resources to environmental management, which could help them to recognize and prevent environmental problems. Clubs also need to improve the relationship with stakeholders by active communications to gain feedbacks from the stakeholders and satisfy their needs of CER.

The results of this study offer club managers with suggestions to overcome internal barriers and in turn to improve the implementation of ERB practices. For example, clubs could convince their members the advantage of CER by educating them on environmental issues. As a result, these members would be more willing to pay more fees for clubs' CER. In this case, clubs could implement ERB consistently and maximize their profits while improving environmental performance.

This study provides club managers with a to-do list of ERB practices in three dimensions: planning and organizational practices, waste and pollution practices and communication practices. These practices could help clubs to solve the current environmental issues and prevent clubs from causing potential environmental problems in planning environmental management process. Moreover, communication practices can help clubs to build positive image by showing the achievements from implementation of ERB (Gonzalez-Benito & Gonzalez-Benito, 2005; Grosbois, 2012).

In this study, non-SUS clubs perceived CER to be less important, perceived more barriers, and implemented fewer ERB practices than SUS clubs did. The findings in this study imply that clubs should conduct sustainable development to improve ERB implementation, so that they could understand the benefits of engaging in CER, which could help them to save the costs of resources and to build good environmental images. In addition, they will implement more ERB practices by overcoming barriers to ERB.

### **Limitations and Future Research**

The present study has limitations that could be addressed in future research. First, the participated clubs in this study were members of the McMahon Group. There are more than 15,000 clubs in the United States, while there are only 3,250 members in the McMahon Group. Therefore, some target clubs were not in the client list of McMahon group, and the participated clubs may or may not represent all the clubs in the United States.

Second, this study investigated current ERB practices in clubs, but the trend of ERB implementation still unknown. Future studies could apply clubs' perceived barriers and current ERB implementation to predict the managerial intention to implement ERB and



explore the relationship between the interactional effects of perceived barriers to ERB and current ERB on clubs' future intentions to implement ERB.

Third, this study only measured the current ERB practices of clubs, but did not measure the financial performance at clubs. For example, this study did not measure the business profits or member and stakeholder satisfaction. Therefore, the results of this study could not explain whether the existing ERB implementation is financially beneficial to clubs. A future study could also investigate the financial performance of clubs to identify the effects of CER.

Finally, the implementation of ERB practices can be influenced by various factors, such as environmental attitude (Papagiannakis & Lioukas, 2012), environmental concern (Park & Kim, 2014), environmental knowledge (Fryxell & Lo, 2003), environmental awareness (Delmas & Toffel, 2004; Gonzalez-Benito & Gonzalez-Benito, 2006), self-efficacy (Taberner & Hernandez, 2011), and motivation (Lynes & Andrachuk, 2008). For example, managerial attitude toward ERB could positively influence the ERB practices of organizations, and affect the corporate environmental responsiveness (Papagiannakis & Lioukas, 2012). Future research can further explore the relationship between managerial psychological factors and ERB implementation of clubs.

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## APPENDIX A: IRB APPROVAL

**IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY**  
OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Institutional Review Board  
Office for Responsible Research  
Vice President for Research  
1138 Pearson Hall  
Ames, Iowa 50011-2207  
515 294-4566  
FAX 515 294-4267

**Date:** 12/23/2015

**To:** Xingyi Zhang  
3021 Regency Court  
Ames, IA

**CC:** Dr. So Jung Lee  
8A MacKay Hall  
Eunha Jeong  
31 MacKay

**From:** Office for Responsible Research

**Title:** Corporate Environmental Responsibility of Country Club

**IRB ID:** 15-738

**Study Review Date:** 12/22/2015

The project referenced above has been declared exempt from the requirements of the human subject protections regulations as described in 45 CFR 46.101(b) because it meets the following federal requirements for exemption:

- (2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey or interview procedures with adults or observation of public behavior where
  - Information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects cannot be identified directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; or
  - Any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could not reasonably place the subject at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to their financial standing, employability, or reputation.

The determination of exemption means that:

- **You do not need to submit an application for annual continuing review.**
- **You must carry out the research as described in the IRB application.** Review by IRB staff is required prior to implementing modifications that may change the exempt status of the research. In general, review is required for any modifications to the research procedures (e.g., method of data collection, nature or scope of information to be collected, changes in confidentiality measures, etc.), modifications that result in the inclusion of participants from vulnerable populations, and/or any change that may increase the risk or discomfort to participants. Changes to key personnel must also be approved. The purpose of review is to determine if the project still meets the federal criteria for exemption.

Non-exempt research is subject to many regulatory requirements that must be addressed prior to implementation of the study. Conducting non-exempt research without IRB review and approval may constitute non-compliance with federal regulations and/or academic misconduct according to ISU policy.

**Detailed information about requirements for submission of modifications can be found on the Exempt Study Modification Form.** A Personnel Change Form may be submitted when the only modification involves changes in study staff. If it is determined that exemption is no longer warranted, then an Application for Approval of Research Involving Humans Form will need to be submitted and approved before proceeding with data collection.

Please note that you must submit all research involving human participants for review. **Only the IRB or designees may make the determination of exemption**, even if you conduct a study in the future that is exactly like this study.

Please be aware that **approval from other entities may also be needed.** For example, access to data from private records (e.g. student, medical, or employment records, etc.) that are protected by FERPA, HIPAA, or other confidentiality policies requires permission from the holders of those records. Similarly, for research conducted in institutions other than ISU (e.g., schools, other colleges or universities, medical facilities, companies, etc.), investigators must obtain permission from the institution(s) as required by their policies. **An IRB determination of exemption in no way implies or guarantees that permission from these other entities will be granted.**

## APPENDIX B: SURVEY INSTRUMENT



# McMahon Group PULSE SURVEY

**McMahonGroup**  
PRIVATE CLUB PLANNERS & CONSULTANTS

THE SOURCE FOR PRIVATE CLUB EXCELLENCE™

McMahon Group, in conjunction with Iowa State University, is conducting a comprehensive study about environmental and green initiatives at private clubs. Your response to the survey will be kept confidential. Results will be published in a summary form without identifying responses from specific persons or clubs.

Please take a few minutes to complete this questionnaire, answering all questions that pertain to you and your club. If you have any questions or comments, please contact McMahon Group at (800) 365-2498 or by e-mail at [karen@mcmahongroup.com](mailto:karen@mcmahongroup.com).

In appreciation for your participation, McMahon Group will e-mail you a summary of the Pulse Survey results.

At the conclusion of this Pulse Survey, Iowa State University has prepared an additional survey with questions to learn more about environmental behaviors. Please click on the corresponding link at the end of this Pulse Survey and you will be redirected to their survey. Thank you for your time and assistance in this study for Iowa State University.

2. In which state or U.S. Territory is your club located?

If your club is located in Canada, in which province are you located?

If your club is located outside of the United States or Canada, please tell us which country your club is located in:

3. Which of the following best describes your club type?

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Golf Club                 | <input type="radio"/> Swim and Tennis Club       |
| <input type="radio"/> Country Club              | <input type="radio"/> Yacht Club                 |
| <input type="radio"/> City/Dining/Athletic Club | <input type="radio"/> Other <input type="text"/> |
| <input type="radio"/> Racquet Club              |  |

4. How many members do you have in your main (full/regular) membership category?

- |                                   |                                       |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> 250 or less | <input type="radio"/> 751 to 1,000    |
| <input type="radio"/> 251 to 500  | <input type="radio"/> 1,001 to 1,500  |
| <input type="radio"/> 501 to 750  | <input type="radio"/> More than 1,500 |

5. Who owns your club?

- ☐ Member-owned
- ☐ Management Company
- ☐ Developer
- ☐ Other

8. Does your club have sustainable practices?

Yes

☐

No

☐

9. How important is sustainability to your club?

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Very important                    | <input type="radio"/> Unimportant      |
| <input type="radio"/> Important                         | <input type="radio"/> Very Unimportant |
| <input type="radio"/> Neither important nor unimportant |  |

10. How often does your board discuss sustainability?

- ☐ Never
 ☐ Sometimes
 ☐ Rarely
 ☐ Often

11. Does your club have a member committee that focuses on sustainability?

Yes

☐

No

☐

12. Does your club allocate funds specifically for environmentally sustainable practices?

Yes

☐

No

☐

13. Please tell us your level of agreement with the following statements:

	<u>Strongly Agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Neutral</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>
My club hesitates to implement environmentally responsible behavior as it may interrupt our work process.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My club has had a negative experience with implementing environmentally responsible behavior.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My club has adequate technical knowledge and skills to implement environmentally responsible behavior.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The economy alters the priority given to environmentally responsible behavior.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Our members care about the club operating as an environmentally responsible organization.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Our members do not want to pay more in order to be a more environmentally responsible organization.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It costs the club more money to be a more environmentally responsible organization.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Clubs have no motivation to be environmentally responsible.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The national organizations in the club industry do not encourage clubs to be environmentally responsible.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

14. Below is a list of environmentally responsible behaviors and practices. Please let us know which ones you are practicing at your club today and which ones you plan on implementing in the near future (within 1 year):

### General

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Comprehensive environmental		
policy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Full-time employees devoted to environmentally responsible behavior	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Engage in voluntary environmental programs (e.g., Audubon Society)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Staff training programs for environmental practices	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Dedicated staff person for environmental practices	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Financial support for environmental practices from leadership	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Adequate evaluation systems that identify environmental problems	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Receive support from leadership for implementing environmental practices	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Pollution and Waste

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Use environmentally safe products on the golf course/grounds	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reduced the amount of water on the golf course/grounds	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Converted to all-electric fleet of vehicles	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Use more recyclable products compared to a year ago	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reduced use of bottled water compared to a year ago	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Communication

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Develop environmental reports for the membership	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sponsor environmental events in your area	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

15. Does your club have a golf course(s)?

Yes☐No☐